

King County
Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Solid Waste Division

Class Act

School Recycling Program Newsletter — March 2006



Students teaching students about protecting the environment by making better choices when using household products.

Hazards on the Homefront News

Students Teaching Students

Barbara Wilson's high school health students at the Secondary Academy for Success (Bothell) held a Hazards on the Homefront

Forum in January to teach the junior high students about protecting the environment by making better choices when using household products. The students designed stations that taught their junior high pupils how to identify a product's level of hazard by reading its label and how to properly dispose the products in bins labeled with their ultimate destination. They also demonstrated safe cleaning alternatives. The younger students enjoyed playing Toxic Free Bingo and sampling apples grown without pesticides. Junior high students and their teacher Pete McCausland commented that they "really learned a lot about hazards and had fun in the process," and that "students teaching students ...reinforces ideas and makes learning new concepts seem fresh." Principal Holly Call also noted that the students "shared that they had learned so many new ways to live and create a healthy environment." The high school students' next project is to volunteer at the 21 Acres Project in Woodinville. Students will help remove blackberries there as well as conduct other projects to enhance the environment in a sustainable manner.



Discovery Elementary students accept 2005 Earth Heroes at School awards on behalf of their teachers.)

Nominate an Earth Hero at School (This could be you!)

The Earth Heroes at School Program celebrates students, teachers, staff, and volunteers who implement projects at their school or beyond to protect our environment. Is someone at your school an outstanding advocate for conserving natural resources? Do you have a school

program that reduces your school's impact on our environment? If so, nominate them for an Earth Heroes at School award! Nominations for the 2006 program are due March 10, 2006. Winners are honored each year at a reception featuring entertainment, refreshments, and presentation of awards by King

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Celebrate Earth Day April 22

This year's Earth Day theme is climate change. For information and ideas on celebrating Earth Day, visit www.earthday.net.



King County Green Schools Program Now Open for Applications from Schools and School Districts

One or two school districts and about ten individual schools will be accepted into the Green Schools program this spring, with assistance starting this summer or fall. This program can help your school district or school meet

County Executive Ron Sims. Last year's winning projects ranged from improving waste reduction and recycling to watershed and stream stewardship. For more information, visit www.metrokc.gov/dnrrp/swd/education/earth-heroes.asp or contact Angela Wallis at 206-296-4432, or Angela.Wallis@metrokc.gov.

Green Team Update

These Students Are Leaders in Recycling

Students at **Evergreen High** (Highline) launched a new recycling program at their school in December with assistance from King County's Waste Reduction and Recycling Assistance Program. The ASB Leadership Team and ELL Science students are collecting paper, plastic bottles, and aluminum cans twice a week. To promote the new program, they prepared posters and announcements. The Evergreen TV program also created a video on proper recycling that was shown to the whole school.

Sheila Hanson's third-grade Green Team at **Marvista Elementary** (Highline), Carol Murphy's fourth-graders at **Bellevue Christian Mack Elementary**, Kay Hoffman's third-graders at **Rock Creek Elementary** (Tahoma), and Dori West's fifth-graders at **Audubon Elementary** (Lake Washington) have all taken on responsibility for becoming recycling experts and encouraging the rest of the school to improve recycling with activities such as creating posters with fun facts about recycling and setting up reuse boxes. Audubon's Green Team also has adopted a local park and has been removing invasive weeds as well as using a worm bin. Angie Strauss's first-grade students at **Helen Keller Elementary** (Lake Washington) also started a worm bin. Shelly Landschulz's sixth-grade students along with Melissa Whitney's third grade students at **Syre Elementary** (Shoreline) collect recycling weekly for the school and do promotional activities for recycling and other environmental topics.

King County's School Recycling Assistance Program Helps Ridgecrest Elementary School to Double Recycling

Ridgecrest Elementary School doubled the quantity of materials it recycles by improving paper collection in the classrooms and adding plastic bottles and aluminum cans to their recycling program. The school doubled the size of its recycling container and reduced the size of the outdoor garbage dumpster from eight to six cubic yards. By reducing garbage volume by 25 % and increasing what they recycle, Ridgecrest students and staff will save \$1,638 in garbage disposal costs during the 2005-06 school year.

Mary Rae, 3rd/4th grade teacher, and Glenda Jablinske, Resource Room Teacher, both lead Ridgecrest's Green Team and worked to improve recycling at the school. Sixth-grade Green Team students monitor the collection of plastic bottles and aluminum cans in the school cafeteria, and help students determine what is and is not accepted in the recycling program. They also collect paper, plastic bottles and aluminum cans from recycling containers in classrooms, offices and hallways throughout the building. Kitchen staff now recycle tin (steel) cans as well as plastic jugs and containers. Parents, staff and PTA members are encouraged to purchase beverage containers that are recyclable rather than juice boxes or cartons that cannot be recycled at the school.

environmental goals. You set goals in two to four out of eight categories (including Waste Reduction & Recycling, which is required, Energy Conservation, Water Conservation, and Hazardous Waste Reduction & Management). We'll help you achieve your goals by providing practical assistance, information and referrals, and supplies such as recycling containers.

Find the simple application forms for districts or for individual schools (public or private) at www.metrokc.gov/dnrrp/swd/greenschools. Click on "Getting Started" in the left hand column for the application form. Call Dale Alekel at 206 296-8457 if you have questions about the application or the program.



Reduce Newspaper Waste
Are unwanted free newspapers

*piling up at your school?
Reduce waste by cancelling these subscriptions.*

Student Fair "Cleans Up"

With the guidance of science teachers Charlie Jonas, Alicia Heyel, and Katie Giordano, 350 eighth-grade students at McKnight Middle School (Renton) conducted research, cost-analyses, and hand-on experiments comparing hazardous household cleaning products with safer alternatives and then presented their results at a Green Cleaning Products Show. Students shared their knowledge and provided recipes for making safe household products with 175 community members and staff. Show visitors filled out a brief evaluation, and almost everyone commented that they were now willing to try a new product. As a result of the project, students and community members alike are

Schools interested in receiving free assistance to improve their recycling program, can contact Dale Alekel. She can be reached at 206-296-8457 or dale.alekel@metrokc.gov.

REGISTER TODAY!

Keeping Students Safe:
Protecting Environmental
Health in Schools

Wednesday, April 12, 2006
12:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Puget
Sound Educational Service
District, Renton

To register, contact Erin McGourty
at 206-583-0655 or email
workshops@triangleassociates.com.
Copies of the workshop flyer can
also be downloaded from the Local
Hazardous Waste Management
Program website at
www.govlink.org/hazwaste.

Protecting Environmental Health in Schools

A responsibility of school districts is making sure that school buildings are clean and safe. But many of the practices used to keep buildings clean and functional can have an impact on the health of those who use the building, particularly young children whose bodies are still developing. Indoor air quality, increasing incidence of asthma among students

and staff, hazardous cleaning materials, and pesticides are among the concerns receiving increased attention in the area of school health and maintenance.

King County and the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program are offering a workshop on Wednesday, April 12 on strategies to improve environmental health at schools. The workshop is intended for maintenance and operations employees, risk managers, and school nurses, and includes presentations from both expert speakers and school district staff on successful and safe maintenance practices currently in use. Workshop participants will have further opportunity to gain information during question-answer sessions.

Simple Steps to Protect Health in the Classroom

Here are some simple tips that can keep your classroom healthier.

- Keep ventilation systems clear. Be sure to avoid placing materials on top of or in front of the classroom vents that keep the air circulating and fresh.
- Avoid the use of air fresheners. In stuffy rooms with lots of kids, it's tempting to bring in air fresheners to mask any odors. However, students with respiratory conditions may be highly sensitive to the chemicals in air fresheners. Aerosol products, in particular, contain a small percentage of easily inhaled fine particles that can cause immediate injury to lung tissue as well as be absorbed in the bloodstream. Other types of air fresheners can cause irritation of the respiratory tract.
- Don't bring in your own cleaners. Whether it's for cleaning up spills or germs, teachers sometimes bring in their own cleaners for the classroom. These products may be hazardous. School buildings are required to have Material Safety Data Sheets on all chemical products in the school, so if you have a problem, please check with your school maintenance staff. As for germs, the best approach is to wash hands frequently with plain soap and water.
- Add a doormat to the classroom entrance. If your classroom

more aware of how household hazardous products can harm them and which alternatives work well. One participant wrote, "I can't wait to try these safer alternatives! I've been wanting to get rid of the strong, dangerous products in my home, but didn't know about the alternatives- until this show!"

Classroom Workshops Available

Sign up for free classroom workshops and other school programs. For more information, visit www.metrokc.gov/dnrp/swd/education/index.asp.

Native Plants Benefit the Environment



Students at St. Luke's plant a native garden to reduce the need for pesticides and other garden chemicals at their school.

has a door leading directly outside, ask for a doormat for the entrance. Studies have shown that using a doormat directly reduces that amount of dirt and any hazardous materials in that dirt that gets in the classroom. Teach students to "stomp and scrub" after playing outside.



King County Solid Waste Division's School Recycling Program Newsletter

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